

The next vicious circle in Africa

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Alban Brisset

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Africa continues to be the sacrificial continent. After the riches found beneath its soil, now its arable surface is becoming the World economy's target to produce biofuel for Europe or to feed Asia. Africa was the mine of the world, it is now becoming its farm.

Africa would need to triple its agricultural production before 2050 to feed its own population. Yet, this will be sacrificed to allow the other continents to increase short-term profits. The Government of South Korea and the South Korean group Daewoo tried to acquire 1.3 million hectares in Madagascar in 2009 to grow corn, with a blind eye turned by local politicians focussed on their re-election. At present, Madagascar rent their fields to European biofuel projects. This monoculture leads to deforestation, lack of water resources and soil erosion. How many years will it still take to understand that Madagascar is an island and therefore, the environment is fragile.

Bangladesh feed its 150 million people with rice which comes from Uganda or from Tanzania. Does anybody wonder if the Ugandans or the Tanzanians eat enough?

The solutions could be to support the Africans by giving them seeds and better infrastructure for storage and transport. Instead of that, multinationals encourage monoculture to produce biofuels or cultivate rubber plantations. The continent known as 'The Cradle of Civilisation' possesses 60 % of all non cultivated lands and is also affected by the growing greed of the multinationals: Liberia, Mozambique, Cameroon, Gambia, Senegal, Gabon ... Contracts are done without transparency at dumping prices (a half-dollar per hectare per year for a duration of 99 years) – the type of practices which have been used in many other sectors. Liberia does not own more than half of its land area. Gabon imports its food: Africa has become crazy!

Multinationals like to show their diamond facet of 'Corporate Social Responsibility' more and more. But does the 'Greening' produced by planting a palm tree plantation of several thousand hectares justify the eradication of local mixed farming? The carbon index of this green industry is very bad. And are European or Asian Corporate Social Responsibility policies at the expense of Africa? There is the image peddled by 'CSR' professionals and the African reality.

Everything can be sold, everything can be bought, you just need to give it a price! Anyway, how can you fight to defend your territory when you're starving? Does starvation happen by lucky chance?

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